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HMRCENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
2 December 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Chile

(Situation Report - As of 1200 PM EST)

1. The nightlong violence in Santiago set off by a women's demonstration against the government on 1 December is a significant escalation of steadily rising tensions between the Allende Government and its opponents.
2. A state of emergency declared in Santiago Province this morning puts the area under military control and empowers the government to make arrests without warrants, impose news censorship, and ban all parades and demonstrations. The two major opposition radio stations in Santiago have been closed by official order. However, a farewell rally for Castro will be held this evening.
3. The city is calm, and Congress is meeting in special session to consider last night's events and the National Party's charges against Interior Minister Toha for not protecting the demonstrators.
4. The demonstration had been advertised in the press by the sponsoring Christian Democrats and National Party groups as a protest over growing food shortages and the Castro visit. An exceptionally large crowd turned out. The administration, which had apparently underestimated the appeal of these issues, provided only minimal police escort. When radicals of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left attacked the women, police reinforcements used teargas and other riot measures against both groups. Many bystanders became involved since it was at a busy traffic hour and location.

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5. After the demonstration was broken up, scattered violence broke out in various areas of Santiago. At 0330 Toha went on a national radio and television network to announce the ban on street marches and to blame the outbreak on seditious plotting by opposition forces.

6. Both sides appear surprised by the extent of the violence, and it is too early to gauge its long-term effect. Students, workers, and other groups have become increasingly critical of the effects of the Allende government's policies and have clashed frequently in recent weeks with radical government supporters. The police have often been drawn in to restore order.

7. Only recently have the divergent opposition groups shown some ability to work together to capitalize on the dissatisfaction. Their continuing differences and the state of emergency will probably inhibit further demonstrations. The Allende Government, on the other hand, risks further public displeasure if it takes more repressive measures. It will probably lean heavily on propaganda efforts to picture any expression of opposition as instigated by the right and possibly the US to bring down the government.